



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, Chair, UD&P Committee
Councilmember Richard Conlin
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

FROM: Diane M. Sugimura

DATE: July 8, 2004

SUBJECT: Committee Briefing: DPD Monthly Update for July 13, 2004 Meeting

Volumes Continue High

Revenues: Through the end of May building revenue is approximately 10.5% above forecast and may exceed \$19 million for the year (initially anticipated to be \$17.4 million). We received permission from Department of Finance to use our contingent budget authority to allow us to use the additional revenue to help us with the resources needed to keep up with the workload. We will be monitoring our revenues monthly, and reporting to Finance.

Land Use Pre-submittal Conferences: Pre-submittal conferences increased 23% (from 111 to 137) in the first half of 2005 compared with 2004. Estimated project valuation for half a year, from \$409 million to \$692 million in 2005.

Master Use Permits: Year to date MUP applications are up 10% over 2004 with a total of 339 applications. MUP reviews completed within 120 days increased from 50% in the first quarter to 59% in the second quarter of 2005. We continue to work on improving this.

Design Review: Design review applications almost doubled from the first to the second quarter, from 22 to 41 applications.

Construction Permits: For non-routed plans, our goal is 80% initial reviews completed within 48 hours. For June, 68% received their initial review within 48 hours, and 80% were reviewed within 96 hours. For routed plans, our goal is 80% initial reviews completed within 6 weeks. For June, 49% had initial reviews completed within six

weeks, and 78% were reviewed within 8 weeks. In terms of the 120-day timeline for issuance, we've consistently stayed within the 88-91% range since 1999.

Hansen Technology Implementation

Hansen implementation is still scheduled for July 19. A go/no go decision will be made next week, but at this time, we do not foresee problems with our go-live date. We are expecting a drop in productivity for at least the first 30 days as staff become more comfortable with actual use of the system. We have provided staff with 107 training sessions or labs that represent well over 2,000 staff hours of training. We have also been running simulation exercises during what would normally be staff meeting times.

Housing Demolition, Mid-2004 to Mid-2005

Last month you asked about demolitions and whether or not they were concentrated in certain parts of town. For this exercise, we excluded single family homes. The great majority involved duplexes, a total of 47 structures. In addition, 11 triplexes and 4 fourplexes were demolished. Apartments included 5, 7, 14, 15, 22, 32, and 64 unit structures. The majority of the demolitions occurred in the central and north parts of town (see attached map).

Pending Abatement Demolition in Magnolia

We are finalizing a contract for the demolition of an unfit single family house owned by an individual with whom we have had many enforcement issues over the years at a number of properties. Our involvement with this particular property began in late 2002 with a complaint about a fire-damaged vacant building that was not properly closed to unauthorized entry. After the owner failed to correct the violation we commenced quarterly vacant building monitoring inspections. Last November we obtained a judgment against the owner for \$46,725 in vacant building violation penalties and litigation costs; we are still in the process of trying to collect our costs of the vacant building monitoring inspections. We also determined that the structure is unfit for human habitation under the City's housing code. In October of 2004 we obtained a court abatement order allowing us to abate the property. We anticipate that the demolition will be complete by early August. The costs of the demolition will ultimately be collected by placing a tax lien on the property. We are also pursuing another abatement case at a second fire-damaged house located in Ballard owned by the same individual. We have obtained a judgment for \$58,650 for penalties and litigation costs for violations of the vacant building requirements.

Code Enforcement Program Update

In 2005, we are experiencing a level of code enforcement service demand similar to that in recent years. We are entering our busiest season for complaints related to property development (building without a permit, for example) and vegetation overgrowth. The chart below shows the number of violations complaints we have received to-date this year in several broad categories, as compared to this time a year ago.

Category	Jan. – June 2005	Jan. – June 2004
Zoning	669	771
Rental Housing	195	212
Vacant Buildings	115	88
Construction	547	578
Noise	89	89
Unfit Buildings	6	6
Vegetation Overgrowth	409	390
Shoreline	19	18
Total	2049	2152

The table below summarizes penalties actions DPD initiated through the Law Department to collect penalties for uncorrected violations. The reduction in overall volume of cases approved and closed reflects the effect of position reductions in both DPD and the Land Use section of the Law Department. We currently have 140 open cases in litigation. Two years ago we had fewer than 100 open cases, so there has been a slow but steady increase in the open litigation caseload despite fewer cases being referred.

Code Enforcement Cases Referred for Litigation

Case Type	Approved 1/2004- 6/2004	Closed 1/2004- 6/2004	Approved 1/2005- 6/27/05	Closed 1/2005- 6/27/05
Abatement	3	2	1	3
Building Code	27	17	11	13
Grading/ECA	2	9	3	3
Housing	7	5	7	4
Land Use	14	14	10	10
Shoreline	0	0	0	1
Sign	1	1	1	1
Vacant Building	6	8	4	5
Weeds	1	1	0	0
Total cases	61	57	37	40
Total penalties collected to date:	(as of 6/30/04) \$45,449.25		(as of 6/27/05) \$35,794*	

* Includes one large payment on one abatement case, \$13,871

South Downtown Planning

We kicked off the South Downtown Advisory Group this week. Twenty five members of the community, from a broad range of interests, have agreed to participate on the committee. Eight meetings are scheduled between now and mid October, as well as two community-wide meetings in the fall.

Staff has put together background information on the land use issues and code related issues of the neighborhoods. This will become the basis for further discussions with the Advisory Group and the neighborhoods. We are also working with interdepartmental teams.

ULI Green Building Conference

Last week I attended ULI's Conference, "Developing Green: The Case for High-Performance Buildings and Sustainable Development," which included about 300 people from across the country. The conference was very good ... for the most part, very knowledgeable and experienced speakers, as well as some very good contacts. Dan Winters, a "green" broker, will be in town the last week in August, so we will be working with ULI Seattle to get a group together to meet with him. He has lots of good information about the value of green buildings. His view is that banks should give developers more money (higher loan to value ratio) to build green. I also met Jerry Yudelson, an engineer and LEED expert, who has trained more than 1600 people in the LEED system. We also heard from a major New York City developer (4 Times Square/Conde Nast Building) who has/is developing LEED gold and platinum structures, both commercial and residential.

People were very supportive of what we are doing in Seattle, noting that the west coast is way ahead of the east coast.

City of Seattle Demolition Permits Greater than 1 unit June 1, 2004 to May 31, 2005



Legend

Number of dwelling
units per demolition
permit

- 2 - 3
- 4 - 7
- 8 - 22
- 23 - 32
- 33 - 64

Source: DPD Permit
Tracking System

